WALPOLIANA.

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INTRODUCTION.

THESE Anecdotes of Sir Robert Walpole are not complete or digeſted enough for the peruſal of more than a few friends; there is beſides a delicacy in publiſhing characters of eminent perſons, whilſt their immediate deſcendants are living.

Every thing I have inſerted is on good authority, and from Sir Robert's Friends rather than his Enemies. I can hardly reckon the late Lord Cheſterfield amongſt the latter; for I always obſerved he ſpoke rather with predilection of him, as the warmth and acrimony of party quarrels had then ſubſided. Some of the Anecdotes may ſeem trivial, but they mark the turn and humour of the Man; and to have diſcuſſed the whole of his conduct in public life, would have been entering into the endleſs labyrinth of the political controverſies during his adminiſtration.

WALPOLIANA.

MR. Walpole came into the Houſe of Commons, very young, in the laſt Parliament of King William, in 1701. He voted then by an intimation from the King, for Mr. Harley to be Speaker, againſt Sir Thomas Littleton. The King was not quite decided between Whigs and Tories.—Mr. Harley not acting, afterwards, to Mr. Walpole's mind, he declared that he would never vote againſt his party again.

When he was in the Admiralty, under Prince George of Denmark, the diſcontented Whigs made a ſtrong attack in both Houſes againſt that Board.—Mr. Walpole thought it his duty to defend them, and ſpoke well in their behalf: Being aſked by one of his friends (who voted differently from him,) why he did ſo? he anſwered, That he would never be mean enough to ſit at a Board, when he could not ſay a word in their defence.

He was made Secretary at War, on Mr. St. John's reſignation, 1708. when there was a parliamentary enquiry into the number of forces in Spain. Being aſked by Sir Thomas Hanmer, whether now, they ſhould not have a better army in that country? He replied; "On "paper, Sir, you may be ſure."

Mr. M——n has told me from his father, that the ſum received by Mr. Walpole out of the forage contract, was intended ſolely for Mr. M——n's uſe, who had advanced money to Sir Robert during his neceſſities. Though the practice is not defenſible; the contract was concluded on cheap terms for the public, and ſettled by the general officers.—When Sir Robert became Firſt Miniſter, that family was well provided for.

On the Queen's death, Mr. Walpole being aſked, what place 1714. he would have? ſaid, He was very lean, and only deſired *one* which would enable him to get ſome fleſh to his bones. He was made, at firſt, Paymaſter; and ſoon after Firſt Commiſſioner of the Treaſury.

When

When he quarrelled with Lord Sun——d and the German Miniſters in 1717, he went into warm oppoſition, and in debating the capital clauſe in the Mutiny Bill, uſed the famous expreſſion, " That whoever gives the " power of blood, gives blood." The queſtion was carried for the Court by a ſmall majority; and Mr. Walpole ſaid, after the diviſion, " Faith, I " was afraid we had got the Queſtion;" for he knew perfectly well, that armies could not be kept in order, without a proviſion of that kind, though to be managed with diſcretion.

Sir Robert uſed to relate, that at firſt he deſpaired of throwing out the Peerage Bill, but ſoon conceived hopes of rejecting it, by hearing one country gentleman ſay to another in the Houſe—It is true, *we* have no chance; but why ſhould we preclude our Sons?

He came into power again on the breaking up of the South Sea ſcheme in 1721.—When he brought in the Land Tax Bill, and laid it on the table, he ſaid, " Sir, here this bill ſhall lie, till the enquiry is gone " through, and the country ſatisfied."

When he laid the foundation ſtone of Houghton, King George the Iſt, without his aſking it, gave him 10,000l. and when he covered it in, as much more. The friend from whom I have the ſtory, aſked him, if he had ever received ſuch douceurs from the late King (George the IId?) he replied, I am obliged to his Majeſty for a thouſand inſtances of his goodneſs and favour, but not for one of this nature.

On King George the Iſt's death, the ſucceſſion to the Miniſtry was thought doubtful for a few days, between him and Lord Wilmington: Sir Robert ſoon fixed himſelf by applying immediately to the Queen. At a dinner, where Lord Cheſterfield was preſent, his Lordſhip ſlily ſaid, I was at court to-day, the croud was great, but they did not make way ſo readily for Sir Sp——r C——n as before. " Why, replied Sir Robert, " (very indiſcretely and too coarſly) I do not wonder at that; he took the " wrong ſow by the ear, (Lady S————k,) I the right," meaning the Q——n.

Soon after the Exciſe Scheme, Sir William Keith, who had been Deputy Governor of Virginia, came over with the ſcheme of an American tax; he carried it about here, to recommend himſelf. Lord Cheſterfield meeting Sir Robert one day, aſked him, what he thought of Sir William's project?—Why, replied the other, " I have Old England ſet againſt " me, and do you think I will have New England likewiſe." But perhaps

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at that time more regulations might have been carried through with leſs hazard than ſince.

Sir Robert was averſe to War from opinion, from intereſt, and from fear of the Pretender.—He told Mr. O——w (the late Speaker) that he was not cut out to carry the truncheon; that, if there was a war, the King's crown would be fought for on this land; which happened to be the caſe in 1745 and 6, at Preſton Pans, Falkirk, and Culloden.

The chief light in which he conſidered the army and navy, was that of a ſupport to Civil, i. e. Miniſterial Power.—He was reproached by his enemies with being more attentive to the Civil than Military ſubordination of it. The late King kept that department (as much as parliamentary intereſt would permit) in his own hands. The late Duke of Cumberland, when he came to the head of the Army, greatly improved its œconomy and diſcipline.

He had excellent intelligence amongſt the Jacobites. When he ſaw Alderman Barber, after his return from Rome (about 1730) he aſked him, "Well, Jack, what ſays your old friend the Pretender?" The Alderman ſeeming ſurprized, Sir Robert went on, "Why, did not ſuch "things paſs in converſation between you in ſuch a room? The fact was true, and Barber could not deny it. "Well, Jack, ſaid Sir Robert, "go and ſin no more, leaſt a worſe thing happen to you." Only a Secretary to the Pretender was preſent, and he was in Sir Robert's pay. I have been informed, from good authority, that Colonel Cecyl's having been in a private intelligence with Sir Robert, induced the Adminiſtration of that time not to proſecute him for an Indictment on miſpriſion of High Treaſon when he was taken up in 1744. I once ſaw and read the indictment, which was prepared by Mr. Maſterman, of the Crown Office, under the inſpection of the Attorney and Solicitor-General; the evidence of the Colonel's Jacobite practices was fully made out by it.

Lord Cornbury (one of the moſt amiable and candid of men) commends, in his Memoirs, Sir Robert's ſpeeches, on giving up the Exciſe, and on the Seceſſion, in anſwer to Sir William Wyndham, as the fineſt performances he ever heard in Parliament.—Mr. Pitt, about the year 1750, confirmed the laſt particular to me in the ſtrongeſt manner.

Sir Robert always ſpoke bad Latin with King George the Iſt, who did not underſtand Engliſh. He ſometimes talked it at table, that ſervants might not know the converſation. He likewiſe uſed to ſay jocularly that he liked to go alone (by the privilege of his place) into the cloſet, that he might ſay what he pleaſed, both of himſelf and of others.

I had

I had the following remarkable anecdote from a particular friend of the perſon who was a witneſs to the tranſaction.—Soon after Sir Robert's reſignation, a Gentleman much in his confidence, going to inquire after his health the day after he had been indiſpoſed, found him by his fire-ſide with two boxes full of papers, which he was preparing to burn: The other attempting to withdraw, "Sit you down," ſaid Sir Robert, "I'll tell you what I am about; I was not well yeſterday, I am much "better to-day; but I think it high time that I ſhould examine and deſtroy "ſeveral of theſe papers, which might be of great conſequence to ſe-"veral if not deſtroyed; for, (pointing to one of the boxes) in this there "are ſome heads, and in that ſome fortunes." The explanation was not aſked.—That relating to the heads is obvious; the other may have alluded to ſecret money tranſactions with perſons in oppoſition.—

He uſed to ſay, ſpeaking of Corruption, we Miniſters are generally called, and are ſometimes, the Tempters, but we are oftner tempted.—

In converſation with a friend of mine, then employed in a public ſtation at the Hague, Sir Robert aſked him, how affairs were tranſacted there; the Gentleman replied, "The Penſionary propoſes buſineſs "to the States of Holland; they deliberate, and paſs their judgment "upon it; the other provinces diſcuſs it afterwards; and if there is "a plurality, it forms a reſolution of the union." The Miniſter aſked, if no influence was uſed, and if rewards and puniſhments were not employed; my friend anſwered, "No, the buſineſs was carried or re-"jected by its own merits." "If I was to act ſo, ſaid Sir Robert, "here, half the ſhops in London would be ſhut up the next day."—One may add, that if King William, when Prince of Orange, had acted as the Dutch Miniſter did then, the Revolution would never have taken place, nor would he have kept his Stadtholderſhip many years.

Sir Robert told me once himſelf, ſpeaking of a noble Lord then alive, (1744) that when he was in office, he had ſeveral letters brought him of the Foreign Miniſters here to their courts, giving accounts of our tranſactions in a manner very diſadvantageous to the Miniſtry, and that he traced them all up to that noble Lord. "He made me ſome "compliments at Court to-day, ſaid Sir Robert, (then Lord Orford) "and you know I am not very backward in returning civilities; but I "could not do it to him."—

He was not fond of writing Letters, and did not ſtudy the ſtyle, or write correctly: the longeſt I have ever ſeen on buſineſs from him, was one in 1736 to the King at Hanover; it related to a Letter of the Pretender to

Obrian,

Obrian, his agent at Paris, given to Lord Waldegrave, through miſtake, by Chauvelin; it raiſed ſome alarm, and much ſpeculation here: The Miniſter's Letter is, I dare ſay, in his ſtyle of ſpeaking; the advice in it is very good. The other remarkable Letters of his, which I have ſeen, are to the Duke of Grafton in Ireland, about Wood's half-pence; but they are indiſcreet and angry; he blames the Lord Lieutenant for not ſupporting that unpopular project better; and a few to Lord Townſhend, at Hanover, in 1722, (when he acted as Secretary of State here) which do him credit.

One of his beſt qualities in buſineſs was communication; he always inſtructed thoſe well who acted under him. Winnington and Younge were his moſt uſeful inſtruments in the Houſe of Commons. They attended every thing in his abſence; Committees and Houſe too.—Buſineſs was then conducted with great regularity, and the diſcipline of an army: I remember, in particular, a debate about the commitment on cenſure of a Printer in the winter of 1740; though the ſubject was of no great importance, it was a remarkable good one; all the capital ſpeakers took part in it, and replied to each other. Pultney and Walpole generally lay by till the laſt; the young Speakers began the battle, and the older and more experienced followed in order. They ſpoke with warmth and ſpirit, but without any intemperate or improper heat and acrimony. The different manners of the Orators of that time, would furniſh out a dialogue *de Oratoribus*, worthy the pen of Tully: I have been told by Dr. Middleton, that Lord Hervey had thoughts of undertaking ſomething of that kind. His Lordſhip's Memoirs, though perhaps tinctured with prejudice, would throw light on the hiſtory of Sir Robert's Adminiſtration; he was much connected with him, and with the Court of George II.

He was not ſufficiently delicate about the deciſion of Elections; he once aſked my father, and Mr. Talbot, to attend one: They, after much preſſing, went, and finding Sir Robert's friend had a bad cauſe, voted againſt him. Sir Robert ſwore, he would never aſk an Attorney and Sollicitor again.—I could not help replying, that I partly believed they did it to prevent the Miniſter's repeating ſo improper a requeſt.

I was at dinner at Devonſhire Houſe with Sir Robert in 1741, when the news came, that the French ſquadron under D'Antin had returned, *re infectâ*, from the Weſt-Indies. The Knight jovially repeated the old ſong of the King of France with 40,000 men, &c. but then added gravely, "They will have all their ſtrength at home to attack us." In fact, his fears of Invaſions and of Jacobitiſm were real; though his enemies affected to ſay they were ſtate artifices.—

It is well known that on Lord S———d's death, in 1722, letters from the Pretender were found amongſt his papers, which were examined by the King's orders; Lord Townſhend, Secretary of State, and one of the Executors, aſſiſting.—Sir Robert Walpole, in the courſe of his miniſtry, received more than one letter from that perſon: he carried them immediately to the King, and had the precaution to have the King's Name, G. R. ſubſcribed to each letter, as a proof that he had communicated them.

The Rev. Mr. Etough married Sir Robert to his ſecond wife, Miſs Skirrit, in 1738 or 9. The Miniſter aſked him, how he ſhould ſerve him: "Tell me, ſays the Divine, (who loved nothing ſo well as an Anecdote) "whether you were in danger in 1727, before King George I. went "to Hanover." "I cannot tell, ſaid Sir Robert, Lord Bolingbroke "preſented a memorial againſt me to the Dutcheſs of Kendall, and had "an audience; the King ſaid it was mere Bagatelle; I cannot ſay what "might have happened had his Majeſty lived."—But Mr. Walpole told me he did not think his Brother in any danger.—

In fact, George the Iſt, who loved the private jollity of ſocial life, did in the laſt year or two of his reign ſpend part of every week on Richmond Hill, where his Miniſter had hired a lodging. The favourite Court Lady, the Dutcheſs of Kendal, took umbrage at the intimacy, and endeavoured to divert the King from indulging it; this might produce ſome diſguſt on both ſides; and it was then probably that Bolingbroke got admittance with his paper, which, however, was left by the King in Sir Robert's hands. What is called the New Lodge, in Richmond Park, was ordered to be built by George the Iſt, before he went to Hanover the laſt time, for the purpoſe of continuing thoſe parties; but he did not live to ſee it compleated.

Sir Robert loved to take company home with him to dinner after a debate: when the letters came in, he threw ſuch and ſuch aſide, and ſaid they might ſtay till to-morrow; when he ſaw the direction of his Huntſman, he ſaid he would read it immediately.

When Mr. M—e of Shrewſbury came into the Houſe of Commons, about 1728, he joined himſelf to the Georgia Committee. They were ſtaunch Whigs, and they generally voted with Sir Robert. The Miniſter, who was afraid that ſettlement would lead us into a war with Spain, gave way to it very unwillingly; and after a vote, which had paſſed for Georgia, aſked M—e to dine with him. In a joking mood, after dinner, the Knight very imprudently aſked him when they would divide the money. M—e, a grave man, and not uſed to the other's manners,

manners, was much hurt at the queſtion, though certainly not ſeriouſly meant.

Unluckily, both for Sir Robert and the Public, there was, about the year 1725, a diviſion amongſt the Whigs. Mr. Pultney, Sandys, Ruſhout, and others, went off, and joined Lord Bolingbroke, Wyndham, Shippen, &c. From that time the Oppoſition grew formidable, and the envy to his power as ſole Miniſter increaſed their numbers. That envy was not diminiſhed by the quarrel between him and his Brother-in-law, Lord Townſhend. The true cauſe of it no doubt was jealouſy of power; the particular inſtances I am not acquainted with. It proceeded to thoſe lengths, that, at a cabinet-meeting, as I have been well aſſured, Sir Robert was ſo far heated with paſſion, contrary to his uſual temper, as to be going to ſtrike the other.—The Lords preſent immediately interpoſed. Lord Townſhend retired into the country, and died in 1733 or 4: His friends and relations continued to ſupport the ſame Adminiſtration with zeal and affection.

I may here add, on the beſt authority, that in 1729, Lord Townſhend offered Lord Cheſterfield the place of Secretary of State. He meant, then, a Miniſtry of his own. My Lord aſked him, if he had the Q——n. Lord Townſhend ſeemed not to doubt it; but the event ſhewed he was miſtaken. It is ſingular enough, that in the papers and pamphlets of the time, Lord Townſhend, though the Miniſter for foreign affairs, is not alluded to, and all the dirt thrown on Sir Robert Walpole. It is certain that the latter never affected to like the Treaty of Hanover of 1725, though he ſupported it in Parliament. His Brother was a ſtrenuous defender of it to his dying day. The merits of it reſted on the ſtill undetermined points, whether the Courts of Vienna and Madrid meant only to make up their own quarrels, or, along with that, to take Gibraltar from, and to impoſe the Pretender on England.

The Oſtend Company was a weak project, formed by the Imperial Court to get money for the Emperor and his favourites; and though it alarmed the Dutch and us, we could, at any time, have ruined it in the Eaſt-Indies; and it was not worth the ink and paper beſtowed upon it, in controverſial memorials.—

Sir Robert ſeeing what an ill uſe was made of the Preſs againſt him, ſpared no expence to defend his conduct in the ſame way. The writers he employed were by no means of the firſt rate; but when he and his Brother took the trouble to direct or overlook their performances, the caſe was

was very different. It ſhould not be forgot that Hare, Hoadly, and Hervey, were occaſional champions in his cauſe.

The Exciſe Scheme, in 1733, was intended by Walpole as an eaſe to the landed intereſt, and a check on fraud. It was perverted by faction to the worſt ſenſe; and what was meant as an effectual mode of collecting two important branches of the public revenue, interpreted as a dangerous project to augment the influence of the Crown, and enſlave the Nation. It might perhaps have given Adminiſtration the diſpoſition of 100 or more revenue offices.—Sir Robert's Speech on giving up his ſcheme was a maſterpiece of parliamentary eloquence, and he ſhewed great reſolution when attacked by the populace in the Court of Requeſts. Why he finally yielded, I have never clearly underſtood:—Perhaps many of his own friends were timid, and the elections were at hand.—I have been told that the Royal Family, particularly the Queen, were greatly alarmed by the popular clamour againſt the Bill. " Sir Robert maintained to the " laſt, that had the ſcheme been tried, it would have fully anſwered, and " the public been reconciled to it. This wiſe Miniſter had in two in- " ſtances the good ſenſe to yield in meaſures, which had been incon- " ſiderately taken up by Government; the firſt was in the famous buſineſs " of Wood's Half-pence, which, with the help of Dean Swift's Libels, " or Drapier's Letters, was very near cauſing a Rebellion in Ireland. " The jealouſy which the Iriſh entertained, that a Court Job for a Fa- " vourite Lady was at the bottom, enflamed the general diſcontent there; " for it is obſervable, that, not long after, when a Copper Coinage was " ſent there from the Mint, they chearfully acquieſced in receiving it, " though Swift, then in his dotage, was not wanting in his factious " endeavours to revive the clamour. The other inſtance I allude to was " an imprudent allowance or promiſe to the French Court, in 1730, " permitting them to raiſe recruits in Ireland for the Iriſh regiments in " their ſervice. The Craftſman ſounded the alarm firſt, and it was " ſpreading faſt, when Sir Robert interpoſed, and got rid ſeaſonably of " his, or perhaps his brother Horace's imprudent engagement to Car- " dinal Fleury."

From this period his adminiſtration was rather paſſive, and he undertook little; contenting himſelf to repel attacks, watch opportunities, and preſerve tranquillity. In the Poliſh war, I cannot, in a great public view, commend his conduct. He gave too much ſcope to France; but there were many intrigues, both abroad and at home, which I cannot explain: we mediated and negotiated, but did not reſent Cardinal Fleury's breaking his word with us in the ſecret negotiation of 1734. Sir Robert's Brother, Mr. Walpole, conducting it at the Hague, in concert with

with Penſionary Slingelandt and a private emiſſary of Fleury's. Our ambaſſador was angry and mortified, not duped, for downright falſhood cannot be parried. It was thought the arts of Chauvelin got the better of the Cardinal's natural integrity. We then endeavoured to divide the Allies, and rather than fail, adviſed the Emperor to give his daughter, the late Empreſs, to Don Carlos, though it had been the great object of Lord Townſhend's politicks to prevent that match. Charles VI. had engaged her to the Duke of Lorrain, and treated ſeparately with France. He gave up Lorrain for a peace; Sir Robert acquieſced in it, and was in the right, as the general ballance of Europe was little impaired by it. The worſt effect of it was, that, for a time, it threw the Court of Vienna into the hands of France, and her interpoſition gave then the law to Europe. After the preliminaries between the belligerant powers in 1736, we remained quiet at home, and nothing but the ordinary public buſineſs was tranſacted.—

I may here juſt take notice of a meaſure both wiſe and vigorous, which was the ſending a fleet under Sir John Norris, to protect Portugal from an intended attack from Spain about the year 1735. The quarrel aroſe from a trifling diſpute between the Court of Spain and the Portugueſe Ambaſſador at Madrid; but our trade with Portugal was then of the higheſt importance, not clogged with Monſ. Pombal's Reſtrictions. Our Liſbon Factory was greatly alarmed, and the ſtep which our Adminiſtration took on the occaſion was univerſally applauded.

In 1737 the unfortunate quarrel between the late King and the Prince of Wales broke out: Sir Robert was only paſſive, by complying with the Royal directions; as the cauſes which produced it ſprang ſolely out of the interior of the palace. He once ſaid, indeed, to my father, ſoon after the latter had the great ſeal, and was expreſſing his opinion of the conſequences of this difference in the Royal Family, that, "if there muſt be a quarrel, he thought it better, it ſhould be an open than a concealed one." It had, however, a very bad effect on that Miniſter's Adminſtration, and the Oppoſition acquired additional ſtrength by it. In this ſame troubleſome year another event of great conſequence happened. The complaints about the Spaniſh depredations grew high, and the Merchants petitioned for No Search: Sir Robert conducted the ſeſſion of 1738 very ably, gave room for negotiation, and yet, by the reſolutions of both Houſes of Parliament, protected the national honour. The negotiation about the Convention enſued in 1739. The nation grew clamorous, were impatient for a rupture, and a half approbation of the Convention was carried under Sir Robert's eye by no conſiderable majority in the Houſe of Commons. It is to be wiſhed, that he had ſent out a body of troops immediately to the Spaniſh

1739.

Spaniſh Weſt Indies, where every thing was defenceleſs. Vernon indeed was ſent there, in 1739, with no large ſquadron, and without troops; and the year after, when Lord Cathcart ſailed, both the Havannah and Carthagena had been reinforced. The Reader is referred to Lord Anſon's Voyage, chap. the Iſt, for his opinion of the manner in which his own Expedition was fitted out. It muſt however be admitted, that the depredations on our Merchants, which was ſounded ſo high, did not amount to any great ſum; the difficulty conſiſted in giving the Court of Spain ſecurity on one hand againſt our Contraband Trade with their Indies, and their enſuring us from the piratical and barbarous practices of the Guarda Coſtas, and of thoſe Governors who were in a private underſtanding with them. The perſonal obſtinacy of Philip, the firſt King of the Bourbon line, and the private incitements of the French Court againſt us, were amongſt the more ſecret cauſes of this rupture.

As the war was undertaken againſt Sir Robert's inclination, he too often expreſſed a peeviſhneſs towards thoſe, who thought it was neceſſary and unavoidable; hence the nick name which he gave Lord Hardwicke of Colonel Yorke, upon his ſaying in the Houſe of Lords, that this was a time rather for action than ſpeculation; his cavilling diſpute with the Duke of Newcaſtle about the mode of making ſatisfaction to the Merchants out of the firſt captures from Spain; and above all a warm and angry oppoſition which he gave in council to a propoſal for ſending a man of war (which was to have remained at home) to ſtrengthen the ſquadron going under Ogle to the Weſt Indies.—Theſe interior diſſenſions in the Miniſtry contributed not a little to the new arrangement which took place on this Miniſter's reſignation in 1742.

The ill ſucceſs of the Spaniſh war, the beginning of another in 1741 about the Auſtrian Succeſſion, made the ſituation very perplexed and
1741. dangerous. The Prince of Wales joined the Oppoſition, and ſpent large ſums in Elections. A near Relation of Sir Robert's has told me, that the late King would not furniſh Money enough out of the Civil Liſt to counteract their effect. It would perhaps have been the moſt prudent part at that time for the Miniſter to have reſigned: He was become unpopular throughout the kingdom, and his meaſures were unſucceſsful. The perſon above-mentioned told me, that he then gave him that advice.

I rather believe that he grew indolent and careleſs, after the death of Sir William W——m, and Lord B———ke's retreat into France, and the triumphant manner in which he threw out the famous Motion in 1741.

I heard

I heard that debate in the Houſe of Lords, the fineſt I was ever preſent at there, as ſo many firſt-rate ſpeakers took part in it, each of whom had a peculiar manner. This will readily be admitted, when I repeat the names of Lord Carteret, Duke of Argyle, Lord Hervey, Lord Lonſdale, not to mention the noble Lord who preſided on the woolſack. Lord Cheſterfield was then too much indiſpoſed to ſpeak, but he voted in the Minority. Let me add, that the late Duke of Newcaſtle (though oratory was not his talent) performed remarkably well that day in reply to Lord Carteret.

As the ſcene became more warlike upon the death of the Emperor Charles the VIth, Sir Robert grew more and more uneaſy; and I have reaſon to think, that he wiſhed a neutrality for the Electorate, as he did not think the Houſe of Auſtria and it's allies were able to face the ſtorm. But his Brother (who was a man of great veracity) has aſſured me, that he had no ſhare in the management of it, and blamed Lord Harrington, who attended the King at Hanover in 1741, for not giving earlier notice to his collegues in Adminiſtration. I can readily believe it, after what I recollect of the ſame ſituation in 1757, when, moſt certainly, the King's Engliſh Miniſters knew little or nothing of the Electoral Negotiation.

I was a witneſs to the cloſing ſcene of Sir Robert's Miniſtry in Parliament, and voted in ſome very near-run diviſions: The queſtion which determined this great Miniſter to quit, he loſt by 15 only, on the Chippenham Election. His friends thought he ſhould have reſigned ſooner.

He made an ill-judged attempt to gain Leiceſter-Houſe, through the channel of Lord C———y, and S——r, Biſhop of Oxford. The Prelate very weakly accepted of the commiſſion, and the Prince of Wales rejected the advance with diſlike.

Upon ſome occaſions I heard Sir Robert exert himſelf with ſpirit in that Seſſion; but in general he ſeemed under dejection, and even abſent, during debate.

The late King having, in his Speech at the opening of that ſeſſion, deſired the advice of his Parliament in a very particular manner, I heard Sir Robert (but the occaſion I do not remember,) publicly declare, that if he could collect what the real ſenſe of the Houſe was, on the difficult and dangerous ſituation of affairs, he would, as far as lay in his power, ſupport it in the cabinet as a Miniſter. He did not at the ſame time intimate his own opinion, which ſhewed the diſtreſs and concern he then laboured under.

The following anecdote, and a remarkable one it is, has been left on record by that very reſpectable perſon the late Mr. O——w.

" A little

" A little while before Sir Robert's fall, (and as a particular act to ſave " himſelf, for he went very unwillingly out of his offices and power,) he " took me one day aſide, and ſaid, What will you ſay, Speaker, if this " hand of mine ſhall bring a meſſage from the King to the Houſe of " Commons, declaring his conſent to having any of his family, after his " own death, be made, by Act of Parliament, incapable of inheriting and " enjoying the Crown, and poſſeſſing the Electoral Dominions at the ſame " time? His anſwer was, It will be done.—But it was not done, and I " have good reaſon to believe, it would have been oppoſed and rejected, " at that time, becauſe it came from him, and by the means of thoſe, " who had always been moſt clamorous for it; and thus perhaps the op- " portunity was loſt. When will it come again? It was ſaid, that the " Prince, at that juncture, would have conſented to it, if he could have " had the credit and popularity of the meaſure, and ſome of his friends " were to have moved it in Parliament, but that the deſign at St. James's " prevented it. Notwithſtanding all this, I have had ſome thoughts " that neither Court ever really intended the thing itſelf; but that it " came on, and went off, by a jealouſy of each other in it, and that both " were actually pleaſed, that it did ſo, from an equal fondneſs (very " natural) for their own native country."

Sir Robert was well protected by his friends after his fall, particularly by Mr. Pelham, who had great affection for him, and ſoon ſucceeded to his power, with univerſal approbation. He maintained his old connections, and was often conſulted by them. After having undergone more abuſe than any Miniſter ever went through, he outlived it all, and died both reſpected and lamented.

As Lord Orford ſpoke but twice in the Houſe of Lords, once in the cauſe of his friend Mrs. Le Neve, (who had the care of his daughter, Lady Mary Churchill;)—it was an appeal from a decree of Lord Hardwicke's. It was thought an ill judged ſtep in the new Peer; for the decree was affirmed almoſt unanimouſly. The ſecond time, was on the addreſs about the Dunkirk invaſion in 1744, merely to ſhow his zeal for Government, and attachment to the Royal Family. He expreſſed himſelf with warmth and ſpirit; and I dined with him that very day in Arlington-ſtreet, where he told us the ſtory mentioned page 8.

I have heard, that his end was haſtened by a journey he made on a ſummons from the late King in 1744, who wanted to take his opinion about diſmiſſing Lord Granville, when the great attack was made upon him by all his collegues in Adminiſtration.

Sir Robert had no taſte for reading, writing, or for play; ſo that his later hours (even at Houghton) hung rather heavy on his hands.—It was not

not the caſe of the late Lord H——ke, who read over Thuanus in the original, when he was out of buſineſs.

He was the greateſt Houſe of Commons Miniſter we ever had. His mind perhaps was not elevated, nor his accompliſhments very extenſive, but his knowledge of the world was ſuperior, and his penetration acute.—His greateſt virtues, were his natural Humanity and Benevolence; and his greateſt fault, want of Decorum, not to ſay (at ſome times) Decency; ſo that he often contrived to paſs for a much more profligate man than he really was. He was more indiſcreet in his converſation both as to things and perſons than miniſters of his experience uſually are.

Was I to characteriſe the different periods of Sir Robert's Adminiſtration, I ſhould ſay, that he made the moſt brilliant figure in 1720. He reſtored the National Credit, which was ſunk by the iniquitous tranſactions and imprudent management of the South Sea Scheme; he detected and broke up the Jacobite party, by the diſcovery of Atterbury's Plot; and in concert with Lord Townſhend maintained a reſpectable Foreign Syſtem. Our cloſe Alliance with France, in conſequence of the Hanover Treaty of 1725, was much cenſured by the Oppoſition at Home, compoſed of very able ſpeakers and writers, the Bolingbrokes, Pultneys, &c. I ſhall not enter into the controverſy; but, on the quarrel with Lord Townſhend, in 1730, and the concluſion of the Second Treaty of Vienna, about the ſame time, by which we guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction, that connection was much weakened; though afterwards we did not take up the Emperor's cauſe with ſufficient vigour to maintain our weight on the Continent, and the balance of power in Europe. The ill ſucceſs of the Exciſe Scheme had certainly intimidated the Miniſter from ſtriking bold ſtrokes; and he carried his apprehenſions of France and the Pretender too far. Could Sir Robert have kept off the quarrel with the Prince of Wales, and acted with a little more ſpirit towards Spain, at the beginning of our commercial diſputes, his Adminiſtration might have ſtood its ground. He had able ſeconds in both Houſes, and they concerted their buſineſs well. Lord Cheſterfield once ſaid to me, that had the parties of that day changed ſides, an able Miniſtry and an able Oppoſition would ſtill have ſubſiſted. How often can that judgment have been paſſed ſince, with truth? Sir Robert was from his firſt appearance in public life uniformly and ſteadily attached to the Proteſtant ſucceſſion, and never was ſuſpected of the leaſt deviation from that principle. The ſame cannot be ſaid of others; and it was perhaps his particular merit.

THE END.

SUPPLEMENT.

SIR Robert's favourite taſte was for pictures; if there are more capital pieces in the Devonſhire collection, that of Houghton had a greater variety of pleaſant and agreeable ſubjects. Mr. Walpole's accurate Catalogue leaves one nothing to add on the ſubject, except to regret the loſs of ſuch a collection to Great Britain, and that ſome method was not found to prevent their going out of it.

I have been told (I hope without foundation) that they are not much admired in Ruſſia, where perhaps the French connoiſeurſhip has the vogue.—I muſt confeſs it would have given me pleaſure, to have walked about that noble gallery with the great M——r who formed it. I had the ſatisfaction ſeveral years ago of being ſhewn it by the immediate deſcendant and heir of Sir Robert, then Earl of Orford.

I can't help here adding a few words relative to Mr. Pelham, who, with a ſhort interval, was the immediate ſucceſſor to Walpole in the Treaſury.—If he had not his brilliant and ſtrong talents, perhaps he ſhewed more diſcretion in the conduct of them: he avoided Sir Robert's improprieties and indecorums, and was eminent for the contrary qualities. He came into the chief ſeat of power in 1743, and continued there 'till his death in 1754: I never remember a Miniſter ſo generally lamented. Theſe who had been in oppoſition to him did juſtice to his memory, ſo univerſal was the opinion of his integrity, œconomy, and rectitude of intention: he was a ſafe and prudent Miniſter, averſe to trying untrod paths, yet zealous for the honour of his maſter and the nation. He reduced one year (about 1750)

1750) the naval eſtabliſhment too low; but, on conviction, raiſed it the next ſeſſion to what it had been before.—In company, he carefully avoided the extreme jollity of Walpole, and yet ſeaſoned his diſcourſe with convivial pleaſantry, and told a ſtory remarkably well.—The writer of theſe pages has been witneſs to the ſcenes he deſcribes, and with pleaſure recollects the marks of confidence and regard with which he was honoured by this worthy and able Stateſman. It is pity but the public had erected a monument to his memory; but it is in no danger of being ſunk in oblivion.—He always ſpoke beſt, when he was a little warmed; two occaſions the writer well recollects; one, replying in his own place to ſome ſevere reflections thrown out by Lord S——ch in the other houſe; the other, in moving ſome intereſting queſtion during the rebellion of 1745, in which he alluded to his having taken a military commiſſion in 1715 during Lord Mar's rebellion, which he reſigned, as ſoon as the ſuppreſſion of it took place.

One of the ableſt ſtrokes executed by Mr. P——m, was the reduction of intereſt in 1750. It was done ſorely againſt the inclination of the great proprietors in the ſtocks, and I ſuſpect by throwing out a bait for ſome of the moſt intereſted.

The people of England always applaud a bold, active Miniſter, when ſucceſs attends his meaſures; Mr. P——m acquired their eſteem by the oppoſite conduct: he too had a ſcheme laid before him, not long before his death, for an American tax, and with the additional plea on its ſide, that there was the ſtrongeſt probability we ſhould be compelled to engage in a new war for our colonies. He aſked his private Secretary (from whom I had the anecdote) one day for the paper, ſaying I muſt look it over with my brother and the Chancellor [Earl of Hardwicke].—He returned it in a few days, with this ſignificant remark: "Here, R——ts, you may put up the paper, where it will not be called for again; we have talked it over, and it will not do."

Mr. P——m was no friend to ſubſidies in time of peace: it was much againſt his inclination, and to gratify the late K— and his brother, that we voted thoſe two moderate ones to Bavaria and Saxony in 1750. In this point the writer of theſe *ana* preſumes to be of a contrary opinion, and to think pacific ſubſidies will ſometimes prevent a war, and always enable you to begin one with advantage.

Late

Late events ſeem to have made this demonſtration; but undoubtedly, unleſs the intereſt which engages an adminiſtration to give them is a weighty and important one, the money had better be ſaved: the affair of the K— of the Romans was not an object for this country to be a principal in; but to have kept the Monarch of Berlin our friend, after the peace, or made an active ally of the Czarina, what ſum ought we to have grudged?

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